



Arizona Registrar of Contractors

Message from Israel G. Torres, Director

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October 2005

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ROC launches *Women in Construction Program*

Workshop series provides tools, resources to support construction careers

Next month, the Arizona Registrar of Contractors (ROC) kicks off an innovative new program to foster success in the contracting industry by women. We all know that women are a powerful force in the workplace, from Fortune 500 companies to public service, yet they comprise only 10 percent of the construction industry workforce.

The ROC is pleased to partner with the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Greater Phoenix and East Valley chapters, and the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Phoenix chapter, as well as other prominent women in the industry, to develop and host a three-part ROC Women in Construction workshop series for women in the construction industry as well as aspiring woman contractors.

Construction remains one of Arizona's top industries, and the ROC wants to provide licensed contractors with tools and resources to help them succeed. Through the [Women in Construction workshops](#), the ROC will encourage women to pursue and establish careers as licensed contractors in the construction industry. Interacting with successful role models who already work in the construction industry will have a tremendous impact on women who think they may want to enter the profession.

Let's take a look at some of the facts regarding women in construction. Women make up approximately 10 percent of the construction workforce, according to NAWIC. In Arizona, about four percent of licensed contractors are women, or about 1,600 entities.

Furthermore, our state is in the ideal position to foster more development of construction careers. Not only is there a shortage of skilled labor and more demand for work than there are workers, but women-owned businesses are on the rise in Arizona. According to the Center for Women's Business Research, between 1997 and 2004, privately held, 50-percent-or-more, women-owned businesses diversified into all industries. The fastest growing sector was construction, with a growth rate of 30 percent. Additionally, Arizona is the second fastest growing state (behind number one Utah) for the number of privately held, 50-percent-or-more, women-owned firms.

The ROC Women in Construction workshop series will provide resources and information to current and aspiring female contractors to address the unique challenges and issues facing women in construction. In the first workshop, "Getting to Know Your ROC," participants will gain an overview of the ROC's role in regulating the contracting industry and the agency's programs and services for contractors. This free event will be held 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Nov. 8, at 800 W. Washington St., first floor, in Phoenix. The other two workshops, scheduled for Jan. 10 and 19, will cover the nuts and bolts of how to get licensed and how to maintain and renew a contracting license. To register for any of the workshops, click [here](#) or call 602-542-1525, ext. 7106.

I encourage you to be a part of this exciting, first-of-its-kind program at the ROC, whether you can attend one of the workshops or encourage others to

Investigations Update

Scam Alert for Phoenix Area

10-24-05: Phoenix homeowners are advised to be on the lookout for Brad Vantichelt of Handyman of Arizona. Without the required ROC license, he contracted to do roof work in the amount of \$5,900. The homeowner then filed a complaint with the agency regarding his shoddy workmanship and unlicensed status. Vantichelt also had one previous complaint against him for advertising without a license. The ROC filed the case with the city of Phoenix Prosecutor's Office.



Consumer Alert: Arrest warrants issued for unlicensed contractor Robert John Mowry

10-24-05: Arrest warrants were issued in Lake Havasu City for John Robert Mowry for contracting and advertising without a license. Four homeowners in Lake Havasu City hired Mowry's company, Advantage Masonry, for various masonry projects. Mowry issued proposals totaling more than \$36,000 for four different projects, in which he failed to disclose his unlicensed status. He accepted almost \$13,000 from the homeowners before abandoning all projects. Additionally, Mowry failed to appear in court for his violations, and the warrants were issued with bonds totaling \$12,000.

Tucson resident pays more than \$1,200 for faulty air conditioning repairs

10-24-05: A Tucson homeowner paid Robert Wystrach of Sabino Canyon Heating and Cooling \$1,250 to perform maintenance and replace the compressor on an air conditioning unit. After the "repairs"

participate. Maybe you know someone who has been thinking about entering the contractor industry or someone who needs to obtain her ROC license. There is no charge to attend any or all of the sessions, and I guarantee the participants will find the Women in Construction program beneficial.



Israel G. Torres, Director

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ROC recognized for service to seniors by Area Agency on Aging

On Oct. 7, ROC Director Israel G. Torres accepted the Area Agency on Aging's 2005 Dr. R. Alice Drought Caring Spirit Community Award of Excellence in recognition of the agency's programs and partnerships that provide assistance to older adults.



During the past two and a half years, the ROC has collaborated with industry, trades people, consumer groups and non-profit organizations to have a positive impact in the community, particularly on behalf of seniors.

Some of these programs include:

- **Helping Hands for Seniors Program**

This program provides free home repairs and independent living modifications for low-income seniors so they can continue to live independently in their own homes. In its inaugural year, the program assisted 50 senior households in Phoenix and Tucson with more than \$60,000 in home modifications.

- **Project Cool Aid**

This program provides free cooling system repairs and replacements to Arizona residents, including older adults and those most susceptible to suffer heat-related illnesses by the extreme temperatures in central and southern Arizona. In the three years since the inception of this program, the ROC and its partners have helped approximately 150 families statewide totaling more than \$200,000 in labor, materials and supplies.

- **Neighborhood Outreach and Consumer Education**

The ROC makes neighborhood outreach and consumer education a priority through its Neighborhood Ambassador Program and the New Homeowners' Seminars. Door-to-door unlicensed contracting scams are prevalent in Arizona, often targeting the senior population. In the past two years, approximately 4,500 Arizonans have lost nearly \$50 million to scam artists who prey specifically on older adults. These programs focus on equipping homeowners with information and resources to protect themselves and their neighborhoods from becoming victims of unlicensed contracting scams.

were made, the unit still did not function. Unable to get a response from Sabino Canyon Cooling and Heating, the homeowner paid a licensed contractor to repair the work – now elevating the total price of the job at \$2,000. Wystrach was identified and located by ROC investigators and the case has been submitted to the Pima County Attorneys Office for contracting and advertising without a license.

Protect yourself against unlicensed contracting scams!

To report possible fraudulent home improvement activities or if you have been approached door-to-door by someone claiming to be a contractor, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 or toll-free outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286, or visit www.azroc.gov. Check the company's license status and report the company to the agency if you suspect a scam.

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October a busy month for ROC statewide outreach

The ROC partnered with both industry and consumer groups to provide seminars and workshops throughout Arizona this month.

The agency held ROC Contractors Seminars in Prescott and Yuma in October, and collaborated with the Arizona Roofing Contractors Association and Southeastern Arizona Contractors Association to update their members on new ROC initiatives and programs.

The ROC also teamed up with the local law enforcement organizations, business associations and the Area Agency on Aging to offer its Neighborhood Ambassador scam-prevention workshops in communities including Prescott, Yuma, Ajo, Sierra Vista, Tucson and Gold Canyon.

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ROC Director Israel Torres (left) accepts the Community Involvement Award from the Area Agency on Aging at its annual Caring Spirit Awards. On the right is Curtis Cook, associate state director for AARP Arizona, one of the people who nominated the ROC for this prestigious award.

Through these programs, the ROC aims to build relationships among the agency, industry and the community, as well as contribute to the health, safety and financial well being of Arizona's senior population.

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Home improvement scams on the way as cooler season approaches

As central and southern Arizona residents welcome fall and winter after a long, hot summer, the ROC is alerting homeowners to the arrival of the most prevalent home improvement and repair scam season. Throughout these areas in our state, the construction-friendly climate is a magnet for out-of-state criminal transient contractors offering "good deals" on jobs such as roofing, driveway sealing, painting and various remodeling services.

Unsuspecting homeowners, particularly seniors, often are approached by door-to-door by scam artists looking to make a quick profit as they work their way through neighborhoods. These so-called contractors are usually very friendly, gain trust easily, and claim that they were just in the neighborhood and have a great price on left-over materials. Many times they will ask for full or cash payment before completing the work, which is usually a sign that something is not right.

Anyone who performs residential or commercial construction, remodeling or repair work must have a contractor license if the job costs \$750 or more in materials, labor and other costs or if a building permit is required. Consumers always should check with the ROC to make sure the person they hire is properly licensed.

The ROC offers the following tips to homeowners seeking home repairs or remodeling:

- Make sure the individual has an Arizona contractor license that is in good standing. To check a license, call 602-542-1525 or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286 or visit www.azroc.gov.
- Ask the contractor for references.
- Plan your project carefully and prepare detailed plans if necessary.
- Get at least three detailed, clearly written bids. Ask the contractor what problems may come up during the course of the project.
- Get a written contract.
- Make sure you understand the terms of the contract before signing it.
- Be cautious about paying in full prior to the work being completed and never pay in cash.
- Put all project changes in writing.
- Ask questions if you are unclear about the work being done.

The ROC works in partnership with neighborhood groups, civic clubs and seniors to educate homeowners on how to protect their neighborhoods and avoid being a victim of these scams through its Neighborhood Ambassador

Program. To schedule a presentation or receive more information about this scam-prevention program, call 602-542-1525, ext. 7115 or visit www.azroc.gov.

To report possible fraudulent home improvement activities or if someone has approached you door-to-door, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 or toll-free outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286 or visit www.azroc.gov. The ROC encourages homeowners to check the company's license status and to report the company to the agency if a scam is suspected.

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Project Cool Aid helps 150 families beat the heat, wins national community service award

Wrapping up its third year, Project Cool Aid has assisted more than 150 low-income households with free home cooling system repairs and replacements. The ROC, in partnership with the Air Conditioning Contractors of America/Arizona (ACCA-AZ), launched the program in August 2003.



The Project Cool Aid partners helped families in our state who needed assistance with their cooling system during the hottest part of the year. This service project brings together numerous contractors and suppliers to create a safer, healthier environment for many Arizona residents, particularly those most vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, including seniors, people with disabilities and infants.

In addition to being recognized with the ROC Industry Advisory Council's Building Blocks of the Community Award in August 2005, Project Cool Aid also was honored in September 2005 with the Community Service in Contracting Award by the National Association of State Contractor Licensing Agencies.

Repairs on home cooling systems ranged from repairing hoses and pumps to replacing entire cooling systems. During the past three summers, ACCA volunteers have donated more than \$175,000 in labor, supplies and equipment to Project Cool Aid.



ACCA-AZ volunteers from Hobacia's Refrigeration, Smiley Crane and Amana all pitched in to provide LaVerne Koke, a south Phoenix senior homeowner, with a new air conditioning unit from Project Cool Aid after spending more than five years without a home cooling system.

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